



Douglas Mountain Mine - Permit #M2018016 (Gravel Pit)

1 message

Mon, Nov 26, 2018 at 9:35 AM

John Enochs <johne@diamondbackeng.com>

To: "joseph.walter@state.co.us" <joseph.walter@state.co.us>

Cc: "kbecker.house@state.co.us" <kbecker.house@state.co.us>, "kevin.grantham.senate@state.co.us" <kevin.grantham.senate@state.co.us>, "info@wildsheepfoundation.org" <info@wildsheepfoundation.org>, "rmb@bighornsheep.org" <rmb@bighornsheep.org>, "Seth.gallagher@nfwf.org" <Seth.gallagher@nfwf.org>, "tpf@peregrinefund.org" <tpf@peregrinefund.org>, "Mike.Lester@colostate.edu" <Mike.Lester@colostate.edu>, "cwfd@coloradowildlife.org" <cwfd@coloradowildlife.org>, "president@evergreenaudubon.org" <president@evergreenaudubon.org>, "mangling@gmail.com" <mangling@gmail.com>, "peter.hays@state.co.us" <peter.hays@state.co.us>, "Linda Enochs (jlenochs@gmail.com)" <jlenochs@gmail.com>, Margi Kaspari <margikaspari@yahoo.com>, Jeannette Piel <jeannettepiel@yahoo.com>

Dear Mr. Walter,

Attached is a letter of opposition to the proposed Douglas Mountain Mining project. This project would remove over 100 acres of prime wildlife habitat from use for 25-30 years.

Thank you for your time.

John Enochs

John Enochs

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 1 CPW Objection Letter.pdf
51K

Miller Creek HOA
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November 26, 2018

Colorado Parks and Wildlife NE Region

ATTN: Mr. Joe Walter – District Wildlife Manager; joseph.walter@state.co.us
6060 Broadway, Denver CO 80216

CC: State Representative KC Becker: kcbecker.house@state.co.us
State Senator Kevin Grantham: kevin.grantham.senate@state.co.us
Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF); Terry Myers: info@wildsheepfoundation.org
Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society (RMBS): rmbs@bighornsheep.org
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation; Seth Gallagher – Manager, Rocky Mountain
Regional Programs: Seth.gallagher@nfwf.org
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Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS); Mike Lester - State Forester and Director:
Mike.Lester@colostate.edu
Colorado Wildlife Federation; Suzanne O'Neill: cwfed@coloradowildlife.org
Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society; Kathy Madison - Board President:
president@evergreenaudubon.org
Rocky Mountain Angling Club (RMAC): rmangling@gmail.com
Department of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety; Peter Hays: peter.hays@state.co.us

RE: Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project, Permit #M2018016 with the Department of
Reclamation, Mining, and Safety

Dear Mr. Walter,

Miller Creek is located directly north and across US Highway 40 from the proposed Douglas
Mountain Ranch Mining Project.

The purpose of this letter is to oppose the proposed Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project
currently under permit review with the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. Your office
is tasked with identifying potential wildlife hazards for the project and in a letter dated June 18,
2018, Mark Lamb, the Area 1 Wildlife Manager for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, expressed
concerns on the project's impact to the health of local bighorn sheep, falcons, and elk. We
believe this project would have impacts on far more wildlife than those listed but first want to
focus on the risks to our State Animal (and DPW's official symbol), the Rocky Mountain Bighorn
Sheep. Our local Bighorns are prized in the community for the emotional and economic benefits
they bring; the town of Georgetown celebrates the herd with an annual festival. This mine

would industrialize and destroy critical habitat and exacerbate existing herd stress which your department has specifically identified in research documents. Habitat reduction is one of the major threats to the Bighorn Sheep population.

Mr. Lamb's letter states that the Bighorn Sheep population that inhabits this area is one of Colorado's primary "Tier 1" bighorn sheep herds, and the CPW's September 2015 report "Population Estimation, Survival, Estimation and Range Delineation for the Georgetown Bighorn Sheep Herd: Final Report" describes the herd as one of the "largest and most highly valued" in the State of Colorado. As you are surely aware, this is an ancient native herd that has been used to repopulate many places in the Western USA. Ben Kraft, a biologist with CPW, was recently quoted on a Channel 4 newscast saying your department's objective was to "wisely manage bighorn habitat and make sure that habitat isn't lost, fragmented, or degraded because of our activities". This proposed project will remove over 100 acres of irreplaceable lands from wildlife habitat.

CPW's 2015 Bighorn Sheep Report specifically mentions Empire Junction (the site of the proposed mine and the Kraft interview) as high-consequence habitat where current road traffic produces the most sheep/vehicle mortality within the entire herd and a restriction point that hinders the herd's ability to genetically intermingle. In fact, your report recommends building road wildlife bridges in the area to assist the herd's long-term health. By literally removing the last natural passages for sheep in the area and adding up to 300 trucks a day (estimate provided by the developer to the community) the proposed mine will make the currently strained conditions immeasurably worse.

Elk, deer, moose, black bears, and mountain lions also roam the Douglas Mountain Plateau. The threatened greenback cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brown trout all swim in the waters of Clear Creek, which is fed by the West Fork of Clear Creek which runs along the edge of the plateau. Bald eagles, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, ospreys and hawks all soar above the plateau and breed and nest on neighboring mountainsides. This plateau has a rich diversity of wildlife and is important for migration corridors, nesting areas, lambing and calving areas, winter habitat, and denning sites for many species. Removing native vegetation on the plateau would deplete food sources for all wildlife in the area, and the lush vegetation areas on the adjoining properties would be decimated by the disruption of the natural springs and ground water. Bighorn sheep, elk, deer, and moose are spotted and photographed daily on the plateau, drawn by the springs and vegetation. They all use the meadow and not just on the nearby steep mountainsides for grazing.

The permit application from Empire Aggregate LLC gives very little detail as to how the wildlife will be protected throughout the mining project. However, the area will be removed from wildlife usage due to the long-term destruction of the meadow. Loaded gravel trucks will travel directly through the existing area which is listed as that having a maximum vehicle to sheep mortality. Due to the massive landscape removal, large artificial flood berms would be built along the edge of the West Fork of Clear Creek, risking sediment washing into the creek and negatively affecting the streambed. We must maintain our improving fishery, not go backward.

High winds routinely rake the plateau and it will be impossible to prevent dust from filling the air (as happens at the existing nearby Frei gravel pit), effecting the neighboring mountainsides, specifically the peregrine falcon nesting areas. Also, the applicants hold extremely junior water rights and we question how they will source water to even attempt (surely unsuccessfully) to keep the dust down.

It appears that after a meeting with the Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project developers, CPW is choosing to appease the developers stating that adherence to a few guidelines would alleviate any harm to our bighorn sheep population and all other wildlife. Destruction of wildlife habitat adds more strain on an extremely valuable natural resource and shouldn't be permitted. The job of the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife is to defend and protect wildlife and their habitat. The Douglas Mountain Plateau is the only natural, accessible, and undeveloped alluvial plateau in Clear Creek County. It is a unique geological feature, unspoiled by development, supports many wildlife species and therefore, should be protected. We are urging CPW to take a firm stance and contact the Department of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety before December 18th, 2018, to deny the Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Enochs', written in a cursive style.

John Enochs, Resident
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